



Keep America Beautiful gives askHRgreen.org Award for Cigarette Litter Prevention program

(Hampton Roads, Va., Feb. 3, 2016) – Keep America Beautiful (KAB) presented askHRgreen.org with a national program award for its direction of a regional Cigarette Litter Prevention Program that reduced tobacco-related litter at seven Hampton Roads sites by an average of 74 percent. Members of the askHRgreen.org Recycling & Beautification Committee accepted the award at KAB's national conference, Feb. 1 in Orlando.

"Reversing attitudes and behaviors about cigarette litter should be an important issue for everyone, but it's especially critical in Hampton Roads, which prides itself on our waterways, tourism attractions and business amenities," said Julia B. Hillegass, askHRgreen.org team leader. "This shows we can stamp out cigarette litter by using a strategic, regional approach, and I hope recognition for our program will garner the attention of our region's stakeholders."

Launched last summer, the eight-week askHRgreen.org Cigarette Litter Prevention Program utilized "Cigarette Butts = Litter" messaging, outreach events and the placement of cigarette litter receptacles at selected locations to help turn smokers' behavior around. The prevention program was conducted from mid-June to mid-August, at the following project sites, chosen for the proliferation of cigarette litter.

- Hampton – Buckroe Beach
- James City County – Commuter parking off Interstate 64 at Croaker Road
- Newport News – Hilton Village at Warwick Blvd. and Main St.
- Norfolk – Civic Plaza
- Portsmouth – nTelos Wireless Pavilion
- Suffolk – Downtown in the Main Street area
- Virginia Beach – Lake Smith/Lake Lawson Natural Area, off Northampton Blvd.

In pre-scan studies of the sites, volunteers found 3,223 cigarette butts and plastic cigar tips. The post-scan showed that all project sites saw a dramatic difference in the reduction of litter, with a total average decrease in cigarette litter of 74 percent among all the sites. Portsmouth's nTelos Wireless Pavilion showed the largest decrease in cigarette litter (95 percent), followed by Suffolk's Downtown Business District (93 percent), Newport News Business District (83 percent), Norfolk's Civic Plaza (73 percent), Virginia Beach's Lake Smith/Lake Lawson Natural Area (69 percent), Hampton's Buckroe Beach (58 percent) and the James City County commuter lot (46

percent).

As part of the \$12,500 KAB grant, the Hampton Roads localities were provided with 35 new free-standing and wall-mounted cigarette butt receptacles to be placed in strategic site locations, in addition to 4,000 hand-held pocket ashtrays and 1,000 portable auto ashtrays to be distributed to adult smokers. Additional project resources were provided by askHRgreen.org, which contributed new signage, guiding smokers to the receptacles, and educational materials, emphasizing the impact of cigarette butt litter

Regional Approach Makes Hampton Roads Project Unique

In the past, most KAB Cigarette Litter Prevention Program grants have been awarded to individual KAB affiliates or municipalities. This askHRgreen.org project was unique in that it involved multiple municipalities, working under the direction of a project leader, John Deuel, and with the help of the HRPDC's askHRgreen.org team. With input from the program's participants, Deuel developed the program strategies, conducted training, organized regular meetings, visited the project sites and developed the final report. "The success of this project demonstrates the value of a regional approach, which helps to reduce cigarette litter in more places over a shorter period of time," said Deuel. In addition to recognizing the askHRgreen.org program, KAB presented awards for Cigarette Litter Prevention Programs conducted in Brunswick, Ga., and Fairlawn, Ohio.

Photo: Members of the askHRgreen.org Recycling & Beautification Committee, along with Keep America Beautiful (KAB) President Jennifer Jehn, at the KAB National Awards Program presentation in Orlando. From left to right: Lisa Renee Jennings, Keep Norfolk Beautiful; Wayne Jones, City of Suffolk; Linda Minner, City of Virginia Beach; Jennifer Jehn, KAB President; and John Deuel, askHRgreen.org Cigarette Litter Prevention Program project leader. *Photo courtesy askHRgreen.org.*

About askHRgreen.org

askHRgreen.org is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads— from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the Town of Smithfield and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on Facebook, follow on [Twitter](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the "Let's Talk Green" [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.